



the wyoming game and fish department

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CODY REGION newsletter

Bighorn Basin youth encouraged to apply for Tom Easterly Memorial Award

The application period for the Tom Easterly Memorial award is now open and youth in the Bighorn Basin are encouraged to apply. Recipients of this award will each receive a free lifetime Wyoming game bird/small game license and lifetime conservation stamp, which is valued at \$482.50. Applications are due by April 1.

Youth ages 14-17 can apply by submitting an application and essay describing why the applicant hunts and why wildlife is important to that individual.



Tom Easterly

To be eligible, applicants must reside within the boundaries of the Greybull Biologist District which include Basin, Burlington, Cowley, Greybull, Lovell, Manderson, Ten Sleep and Worland and be a resident who has continuously resided in Wyoming for at least 10 years immediately preceding the date of application.

Greybull Game Warden Bill Robertson said, "The Tom Easterly Memorial Award was established in the spirit of former Greybull biologist Tom Easterly's belief in our future generations of conservationists. This is the third year the award will give two area youth a lifetime Wyoming game bird/small game license and lifetime conservation stamp."

Tom Easterly served as the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Greybull area biologist from 1992 through 2014. "Tom's passion was introducing young hunters to the sport of bird hunting and sharing the importance of well managed wildlife habitat with them," Robertson said.

Applicants will be judged by their application qualifications and the content of their essay by a committee of five. Applications may be downloaded at wgfd.wyo.gov and are available at the Cody Region Game and Fish office.

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In the water

Ice fishing the Bighorn Basin: Buffalo Bill Reservoir

According to Cody Region AIS Specialist and ice fishing fanatic Greg Mayton, Buffalo Bill Reservoir offers some of the most fantastic ice fishing the Bighorn Basin has to offer. Located just six miles west of Cody, this reservoir is easily accessed from town and offers anglers an opportunity to catch several species of trout.

Mayton said, "While safety should always be a priority, anglers should exercise special caution while ice fishing Buffalo Bill Reservoir because ice conditions can change both quickly and drastically."

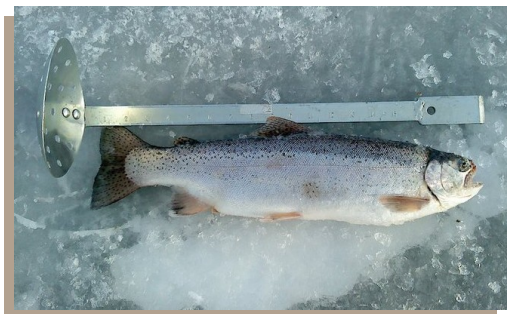
"Anglers should be aware that due to strong winds and geothermal spots in the reservoir, ice conditions can be very unpredictable and can pose challenging safety conditions for ice fisherman," Mayton said. "The wind that persists at the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Shoshone River can cause unstable ice conditions no matter how cold the winter has been. You also have to keep an eye out for geothermal warm spots that can occur across the reservoir. There have been winters with good, safe ice on parts of the reservoir, and in just a day or two, those same spots are open water."

Anglers wanting to ice fish the reservoir also need to consider the weather conditions. "When out on this reservoir, anglers should be prepared for brutal west winds that can crop up out of nowhere," Mayton said.

To check out the weather before heading out, Mayton advises anglers to visit Buffalo Bill State Park's website. "If there was one tip that I could give to help avoid a wasted trip, it would be to check out Buffalo Bill State Park's webcam and weather page to get an idea of what's happening before heading out. The webcam can be found at: <http://dayweather.com/cams/bbr/buffalobillres.htm>.

Mayton continues, "On the brighter side, if the weather cooperates and ice conditions are safe, Buffalo Bill anglers can have the thrill of catching some of the best eating and fighting trout the Basin has to offer."

Buffalo Bill's under water topography is diverse and ranges from shallow mud flats to steep rocky drop offs. While most ice fishermen are pursuing trout, the reservoir contains both warm and cold water fish species including cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, cutthroat rainbow hybrids, brown trout, lake trout, walleye and perch. Some of the most popular places to ice fish are Bartlett Lane off the South Fork Hwy, off the steep shores of Stage Coach Trail and the more easily accessible North Fork Hwy.



A rainbow trout caught through the ice on Buffalo Bill Reservoir.



Cody Region AIS Specialist and ice fishing fanatic Greg Mayton pulls a sled of ice fishing gear out on Buffalo Bill Reservoir.

Fishing regulations on Buffalo Bill Reservoir are different than most other lakes in the Cody Region. Two rods are permitted since it is not a special ice fishing regulation body of water and the use of live minnows is prohibited. The creel limit on trout (excluding lake trout) is three per day or in possession. No more than two shall be cutthroat trout; and no more than one trout (excluding lake trout) shall exceed 18 inches. Lake trout creel is six, with no more than one over 24 inches. Walleye are designated as nongame fish and shall be killed immediately with no creel limit or possession limit.

In the water

Ice fishing Buffalo Bill Reservoir cont.

“When fishing Buffalo Bill, I like to have a lineup of different baits, rods and lures to key in on the species that I would like to chase that day. First and foremost is making sure you have bait available. For a trip out on Buffalo Bill, I never leave my truck without meal worms, sucker meat and shrimp. With these in your sled, you can just about catch any fish the lake offers,” Mayton said.

“For chasing lake trout, I mostly use sucker meat attached to a jig or some sort of lure. Most of the time, I use a quarter-ounce or larger jig or lure that glows in the dark to help the fish see what I am presenting. While lake trout can be found throughout the entire water column when they are actively feeding, they are often close to the bottom, so this is always where I start when positioning bait,” he said.

Mayton continues, “When going after rainbows, cutthroats and brown trout, I suggest using meal worms and shrimp for bait and using jigs and lures that are smaller than a quarter-ounce. Most of the time, these trout are cruising 20 feet below the ice but I have caught them within a few inches of the ice. Using a fish finder provides valuable information about the varying depths the different species of fish are hanging out in. When fishing Buffalo Bill, you will never see me out on the ice without my trusty flasher sonar unit.”



Mayton's go-to lures and jigs for rainbow, brown, and cutthroat trout (pictured above) and for lake trout (pictured below).



On the ground

Biologists classify deer



Above: Worland Area Biologist Bart Kroger observed this mule deer in Hunt Area 116 during a ground classification survey. Right: Lovell Game Warden Dillon Herman uses a spotting scope to observe deer in Hunt Area 122.

Each year, biologists and game wardens collect ratio data on deer populations through ground and aerial observations. In a given area, biologists observe deer and record the total number of deer and the age and sex class of each deer. From the total number of deer sampled, biologists evaluate the number of fawns per 100 does, the number of adult bucks per 100 does and the number of yearling bucks per 100 does. Tim Woolley Wildlife Management Coordinator said that this provides biologists with a “snapshot” of the population. “This information allows us to see how the population is doing and is used (in combination with other data) to evaluate hunting seasons, access



herd productivity and determine survival,” Woolley said. “The information, along with harvest and population data will be available in the 2016 Big Game Job Completion report at wgfd.wyo.gov in early summer.”

On the ground

Case resolved with help from public

Recently, a case involving a poached deer in the city limits of Cody has come to a close, thanks to information provided by local citizens.

The case began on Nov. 14, when North Cody Game Warden Travis Crane received a report of an injured mule deer at a residence in Cody.

When Crane responded to the report, he discovered a buck deer with an arrow protruding from its hindquarters that had been shot with a crossbow. "The mule deer had been shot illegally because the buck season for the area was closed," Crane said.

Crane dispatched the wounded deer, retrieved the arrow and was able to follow the blood trail of the animal to Alger Avenue. While following the blood trail, Crane was approached by witnesses who reported seeing a man earlier that morning who seemed to be looking for something in the same area. "A couple who lived nearby gave a detailed description of a man they saw searching the area, looking over fences and into backyards," he said.

"More information was made available after Game and Fish reached out asking the public to help solve the case through a press release," Crane said. "The fact that we had witnesses who came forward to report suspicious activity was key in solving the case."

In Park County Circuit Court on Jan. 6, Leonard Wascher of Cody was sentenced in this case for the take of a big game animal during a closed season. He was fined \$1,000 and will lose his hunting privileges for three years.



A mule deer buck that was found shot with a crossbow in the city limits of Cody during a closed season.

In the field despite snow and cold temperatures

December brought cold temperatures and significant snowfall to the Bighorn Basin. Despite the snow and cold, game wardens and biologists continued with daily field work that included patrolling and collecting data on big game herds.



North Cody Game Warden Travis Crane heads west on the North Fork Highway after a snowstorm.



Greybull Game Warden Bill Robertson captured this image of an amazing sunrise on a frigid December day near Greybull.

Right:
South Cody Game Warden Grant Gerharter assists a hunter retrieve a cow elk from the South Fork.



On the ground

Cody deer population surveyed



Mule deer in residential areas of Cody.

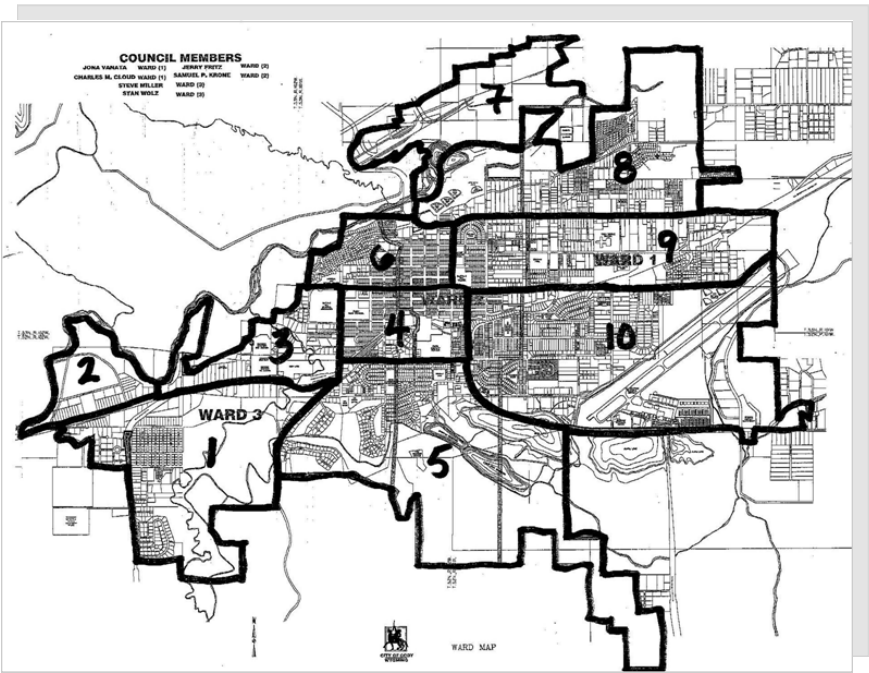


Figure 1. Cody urban deer survey count blocks.

Last month, Game and Fish personnel conducted a classification/trend survey of deer within the city limits of Cody. The survey has been conducted annually since 2011 for the purpose of monitoring deer numbers within the city to help inform city managers and the Urban Deer Task Force.

The city was broken out into ten count blocks (Figure 1), and all deer encountered within a specified time frame were classified into sex/age categories (adult buck, yearling buck, doe, fawn). Areas out of, but adjacent to the city limits of Cody were surveyed as well. These areas included the County Road 2ABN area immediately north of Cody, and the Cooper Lane and Sage Creek areas immediately east of Cody.

A total of 261 deer (258 mule deer and 3 white-tailed deer) were observed within the city limits of Cody, and an additional 245 deer (211 mule deer and 34 white-tailed deer) were observed in adjacent areas. Mule deer fawn:doe ratios were 62:100 in the city limits and 51:100 outside the city limits. Total buck ratios were 39:100 in the city limits and 29:100 out of the city limits. Yearling buck ratios were 19:100 in the city limits and 12:100 out of the city limits. The total number of deer observed in the city limits of Cody from 2011 to 2016 has not varied substantially.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Deer	307	261	296	272	290	261

Figure 2. The total number of deer observed in the city limits of Cody from 2011 to 2016. Numbers have not has not varied substantially.